

HABITS

What Are Habits?

Habits are the automatic behaviors you do every day—often without thinking. Studies show that **60–70% of what we do daily is not based on conscious decisions, but on habits** we've formed over time.

(Source: Duke University, Dr. Wendy Wood)

That means most of your behavior is on "autopilot." This can be good—or bad—depending on what habits you've built.

How Are Habits Connected to Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is your ability to:

- ▶ Understand your emotions
- ▶ Control your reactions
- ▶ Stay motivated
- ▶ Show empathy
- ▶ Manage relationships

Changing habits takes emotional awareness and self-control. To build new, positive habits, you need to:

- ▶ **Self-awareness:** Notice your feelings and triggers
- ▶ **Motivation:** Stay focused on long-term goals
- ▶ **Self-regulation:** Practice self-discipline and patience to manage impulses and responses

EQ is linked to 58% success in many areas of life. *(Source: TalentSmart, Dr. Travis Bradberry)*

How Long Does It Take to Change a Habit?

It's not 21 days like some say. Research shows it takes:

- ▶ 🕒 **66 days on average**
- ▶ 📊 Range: **18 to 254 days**

(European Journal of Social Psychology, 2009)

That means you need **patience + consistency** to change behavior.

Habits and Incarceration

While incarcerated, many choices are made for you—when to eat, what to wear, where to go. That means you may make **far fewer decisions** each day.

When you're released, you suddenly face **3x as many daily decisions**—from what to wear, where to go, to how to respond in social situations.



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Habits can guide you when you're overwhelmed. Building strong, healthy habits helps you:

- ▶▶ Reduce stress
- ▶▶ Avoid impulsive decisions
- ▶▶ Stay focused on goals

Reflection Questions:

1. What is one daily habit you currently have that helps you?

2. What is one habit you want to change or improve?

3. What emotion or trigger is tied to that habit and how can being more aware help?

4. What is one small step you can take today to build a better habit?

5. How do you think your habits will change from now to when you get out? List one you have now and how it will change.
